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Letter dated 8 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letter dated 3 January 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to you (A/ES-10/54-S/2001/7). In that letter, the Permanent Observer of Palestine asserts "that the Palestinian side remains opposed to any terrorist actions" and "does not condone any of the actions" referred to in my letter dated 2 January 2001 addressed to you (A/55/725-S/2001/2). Indeed, this statement appears to conform with the spirit of Chairman Arafat's 1993 commitment to renounce the use of terrorism and other acts of violence. At the same time, however, the Permanent Observer of Palestine states that actions perpetrated against Jewish residents of the territories under negotiations are "the complete responsibility" of Israel. This ambiguous, indeed conflicting, language, as well as the distinction between some victims of terrorism and others, amounts, in effect, to condoning acts of terrorism.

I would like to recall that the terrorist attack near the town of Ofra, referred to in my letter, resulted not only in the murder of a Jewish couple, but also in serious injuries inflicted upon five of their six children who were in the car at the time that it was ambushed.

Regrettably, this is not the first time that the Permanent Observer of Palestine has expressed what amounts to an effort to legitimize terrorism. Following the horrible lynching of two Israeli soldiers by a Palestinian mob in the town of Ramallah on 12 October 2000, he made the following remarks to Reuters: "The amount of anger ... frustration ... pain is beyond belief. The Palestinian people, we believe, have the right to feel that way and it is absolutely understood for them to react in a way that probably is not acceptable under normal circumstances" (Reuters, 12 October 2000).

In his historic letter of 9 September 1993 addressed to the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Chairman Arafat stated, inter alia, that "the Palestine Liberation Organization renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all Palestine Liberation Organization elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline

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violators". This commitment constitutes a basic principle of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. It must be emphasized that Chairman Arafat's commitment was made without distinction with regard to territory. That is to say, he renounced terrorism unequivocally, not only in certain areas as the Permanent Observer of Palestine now implies. Moreover, terrorist attacks have been perpetrated not only in territories under Oslo negotiations, but in recent weeks inside Israeli cities as well, in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Hadera and Netanya.

Therefore, any statements of a nature that violate this commitment, such as the one made by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, undermine the very foundation of the peace process.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative